

A Moment In Time – Weston’s Most Memorable Year

By Zofia Farley

Weston is a beautiful town with a rich history, and there are many records of unforgettable periods of time when Weston was at its finest. A memorable year was 1804, when members of the Lewis and Clark expedition, called the Corps of Discovery, explored the Weston vicinity, describing the location as “beautiful, with fertile soil and a diverse landscape full of plant and animal life.” Of course, there was always the year of 1837, when Joseph Moore, a soldier from Ft. Leavenworth, rowed up the Missouri River and built a log cabin, declaring the land his own. The cabin was to be the beginning of a fine place called Weston.

Weston was a river town, with ferries and steamboats passing in and out of its harbor. Around the year 1850, approximately 300 steamboats docked at the port each year. The small town was growing into a large community of people, and the future looked prosperous. People began to see Weston as a major river society. Life was pleasant for the residents of Weston, Missouri. Then disaster struck.

A series of unfortunate events occurred that tore apart the community, ranging from epidemics, Civil War, and the fires of 1855. However, it was the flood of 1858 that finally ended things for Weston, which began the descent in population. The river was swept off its course, returning to its past course two miles west. High waters destroyed the port, concluding the steamboat trade for good. The majority of the 900 residents that continued to inhabit Weston believed that their

beloved town had finally reached its close. What they could not have predicted is how immaculately the beautiful Victorian and Antebellum homes would be preserved, preparing for families to occupy their rooms and visitors to marvel at the architecture.

Some state that Weston is “better off” to have an unspoiled collection of buildings from a significant mid-nineteenth century Missouri River port community. The National Register of Historic Places surely believed so. In the memorable year of 1972, Weston was designated as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. Twenty two blocks were included in this designation, with more than 100 buildings eligible.

I consider this Weston’s most memorable year because of Weston’s visitors. The town has many attractions and an entire street of quaint shops that families enjoy visiting. Weston has a stable population of approximately 2000 residents, but the popularity of Weston as a tourism destination helps keep it on the map. When the National Register of Historic Places declared Weston a historic district, people started to trust in Weston’s potential. The members of the small community recognized the beauty of the nineteenth century village, and in 1982, the Weston Development Company did just that – developed Weston’s business district.

All Weston’s residents needed to begin the settlement’s growth again was the realization that the community was a lovely historic site that should be shared with the world. The National Register of Historic Places gave Westoners motivation to not let their little town crumble over

time but to instead build it into a quaint attraction and a healthy community that people will enjoy for years to come.